

THE HOD HOUSE
(*Barque Amazon*)
512 Seth Street
Oxford
Talbot County
Maryland

HABS MD-1290
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

FIELD RECORDS

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street NW
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THE HOD HOUSE (*Barque Amazon*)

HABS No. MD-1290

Location: 512 Seth Street (East Strand) Oxford, Maryland fronting Town Creek.

Significance: The HOD house is a vernacular adaptation of a ship's deckhouse for use as a dwelling on land. "HOD" is a mariner's term used for the mid-ship deckhouse on a sailing vessel, usually located between the fore- and mainmast (or House On Deck). The house also has a connection to historian/author Jane Foster Tucker and her husband Ernest Tucker, Jr., a noted yacht designer, boating enthusiast and handicapped person.

Description: The HOD house is a conglomeration of several generations of building. The original dwelling included the HOD, used as a bedroom, with a large living room that was constructed around the north and west sides. The new hip roof covered the HOD and a loft space was created above the HOD. The HOD is 29' long across the front and back and 26'10" across the sides. An 8'x 29' wood deck extends from the waterfront facade.

The HOD structure was constructed of large timbers in the tradition of ship carpentry, with grown tree knees joining heavy vertical and horizontal timbers. The floor and ceiling timbers are cambered to the sides, which allowed rain and sea water to shed off. Windows are located on the waterfront and south wall. An exterior door is located on the waterfront wall. A doorway to the living room is located on the north wall. A closet was added in the northwest corner of the room.

The house addition consists of a large living room on the northwest side with a kitchen and bathroom in the southwest corner. A loft bedroom was built atop the HOD structure.

History: Originally the deckhouse for the barque AMAZON, built 1853 in Baltimore, the HOD was removed and acquired by Elmer Loscomb around 1925. The structure was removed, towed to the site and hauled onto the property by ropes and manual labor. The house structure was built around the HOD in 1928. It is not clear if the entire house was added at that point or if just the adjacent living room was added. The house was deeded to Elmer's son William some time before 1964. In 1964-65, the interior was upgraded with a "regular" bathroom, kitchen and fixtures. Prior to this, the toilet was located in an outhouse and there was only one cabinet with a spigot for washing and cleaning in the house.

Jane and Ernest Tucker purchased the house in 1968 as a rental property and Jane later moved into it in 1992. Salvo and Lynnea Giovanni purchased the house in 2007. At the time of the documentation, the Giovannis were planning to demolish the house to build a new home. They were trying to find someone to remove the HOD for preservation.

Former resident Ernest Tucker was a yacht designer and handicapped person, whose story is told in the 1975 book *Half-Pint*, by Jane Foster Tucker. He grew up in Baltimore and summered on a farm at Turkey Point Island in Mayo, Maryland.

Sources: Interview with Elmer Loscomb July 15, 1968

Historian: Data compiled by Todd A. Croteau (HAER Maritime Program Coordinator) and Richard Dodds (Curator of Maritime Collections at the Calvert Marine Museum), 2008

Project

Information: The Historic American Buildings Survey is a long-range program that documents and interprets historically significant architectural sites and structures throughout the United States. HABS is part of Heritage Documentation Programs (Richard O'Connor, Manager), a division of the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The HAER Maritime Program is managed by Todd Croteau, HAER Architect. Todd A. Croteau produced the large format photographs and measured drawings in 2008.